

YAPTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A Meeting of the Yapton Parish Council was held on the 18th January 2021 virtually using Microsoft Teams, commencing at 7.36pm.

Present: Mr Stephen Haymes (Chairman), Mr Derek Ambler (audio only), Mr Peter Dunkley, Mrs Philippa Greenan, Mr Graham Holden, Mrs Vicky Newman and Mrs Amanda Worne.

Also present: Mr Gardiner (Clerk of the Council), County Councillor Mrs Jacky Pendleton and 7 members of the public including 2 on audio only.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies given for this meeting.

RESIGNATION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR

2. The Clerk informed the Parish Council that he had received the resignation of Mr Doug Maw by e-mail on the 13th January 2021, for personal reasons. This brings the total number of vacant positions on the Council to three. The Clerk stated that he would be advertising the vacancy and writing formally to inform Arun District Council of the resignation.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. Members were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or pecuniary interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda. None were made.

URGENT MATTERS

4. The Clerk had no urgent matters to raise with the Council.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5. (a) A local resident asked if the Village Hall was likely to be used as a Vaccination Centre for the inoculation of local residents with the Covid-19 vaccine, rather than have travel out of the village with all the attendant risks. It was felt that this venue would not be suitable for dealing with the Pfizer vaccine, but may be used in the future when others are more widely used.

(b) A member of the public asked if this was the correct moment to raise a point about local roads. The Chairman stated that this could be raised under the item dealing with the County Councillors report.

(c) Councillor Peter Dunkley raised the possibility of the Council making Yapton Awards. These awards would be agreed by the Parish Council to recognise local residents who are doing things and making a difference in the Parish. He referred to the making of Freedom of the Parish Awards which had been promoted by the LGA. The Chairman agreed that it would be good for the Parish to recognise people who are doing good in the Community. It was noted that rather than having some form of formal / informal awards, the idea of people being recognised for their work in an article in the Yapton News, similar to those 6 people from the Village who had been identified a few years ago, and who had been interviewed by a young person (also on an award scheme) with an article placed in the Yapton News celebrating their achievements.

PARISH COUNCILLORS

6. **Co-option of Parish Councillors** - The Clerk updated the meeting with regard to the current position concerning the recruitment and possible co-option of two Parish Councillors to replace the late Anthony Kendall and also following the resignation of Michael Pickthall. The application deadline had been extended to 31st December 2020 and no further applications had been received. Two applications had been received previously for the current vacancies.
7. With the resignation of Councillor Doug Maw, increasing the number of vacant positions to three, the Clerk recommended to the Council that the recruitment process be extended for a further few weeks to allow for more advertising on the parish notice board, in local shops and in the Yapton News. The closing date would be the 22nd February 2021 to allow time for a meeting to consider any applications to be held in early March 2021, if considered appropriate. **Resolved:** The Council agreed to the Clerk's recommendation.
8. **Appointments to Committees, Sub-Committees and Representatives on Outside bodies** – The Chairman referred to the vacancies which were set out on the agenda paper in relation to committees, working groups and outside bodies which had resulted from the non-filling of the vacant positions. The Parish Council agreed that it would not deal with any of the vacant positions until such time as sufficient applications had been received to enable the Council to co-opt to the three vacant positions.

MINUTES

9. *Resolved* - That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

10. The Clerk referred to various matters requiring update from the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th November 2020. The issues raised were as follows:
 - (a) **Minute 120 (i) (c) – Bund Maintenance** – The Clerk referred to the fact that the Bund was becoming more established and that it was blending into the surroundings. The Clerk referred to an e-mail dated 18th January 2021 he had received from Mr James Jones-McFarland the Parks & Cemeteries Manager at Arun District Council concerning the application of a suitable weedkiller.

- (b) The e-mail stated that “*There is a significant and ongoing debate concerning Glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup which is widely used in both domestic and commercial settings). At this time Arun continues to use this product, but only where it is absolutely necessary (an ever declining list of settings). There is no evidence that the product is harmful to human, animal or insect health when used at the correct dose. To establish a meadow it is really the best solution.*

However, there are contractors who use hot steam or foam (search online for ‘foamstream’ for example). Such applications require easy vehicular access as the technology does not yet offer pedestrian use.

Otherwise, your option are to hand weed or strim very close to the ground and hope for a harsh frost.”

- (c) It was *resolved* that, as the grass is becoming well established, it would be sensible to top-dress with wildflower seed in the spring and let this become established more naturally before considering any further action.
- (d) **Minute 120 (d) (iv)** - West Sussex Association of Local Councils(WSALC Ltd) AGM – The Clerk reported that he had recently been informed that the AGM for WSALC Ltd was due to be held on the 25th February 2021.

COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS

11. County Councillor Mrs Jacky Pendleton presented a verbal update covering the following topics:
- County Fire Services – now improved so returning to normal operation;
 - County Council Budget 2021/22 – this is a difficult budget year, although some additional government funding has allowed some services to continue which might have been cut;
 - Rampion Offshore Windfarm – this is now likely to extend along the coast from Clymping to Selsey;
 - A Tree Plan was being established which would assist parish councils in identifying which trees had been protected;
 - Covid-19 – The Bognor Medical Centre is likely to be the Vaccination Centre for the Yapton area covering 8 local practices in the area. Currently the number of vaccines provided was below the level needed;
 - St Mary’s Meadow – due to the indiscriminate parking in the area mainly associated with the primary school drop-off and pick-up a Traffic Regulation Order was likely to be introduced in the coming year.
 - Potholes – reporting of potholes and any highway maintenance issues can be made online through <https://love.westsussex.gov.uk/reports/home> or contact the County Councillor direct if experiencing any difficulties.
12. District Councillor Mrs Amanda Worne presented a verbal update covering the following topics:
- District Councillor Amanda Worne wished to record her grateful thanks to Parish Councillor Pippa Greenan for all her support and hard work on the Covid Pandemic response locally;

- b. Dangerous House in Foundry Road – Arun District Council were responding to this situation, although some materials required for the repairs were currently unobtainable;
- c. The deep cleaning on certain estates in Yapton just before Christmas was reported;
- d. The wildflower meadow sponsored by Arun District Council on their land was going well;
- e. It was reported that the Croft Meadow Surgery had been declared as a hot surgery for Covid-19 responses;
- f. Skateboarding Park – it was noted that although the play area could remain open the skateboarding park should be closed for use during the national lockdown.

REPORT / UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL PCSO

13. The local PCSO was not in attendance at the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

14. The following items of correspondence had been received since the date of the last meeting and were considered by the Council:
- (a) **Census 2021** – The Council noted receipt of an e-mail dated 24th November 2020 from John Heaton, the Census Engagement Manager, South and West of West Sussex of the Office for National Statistics, informing the Council that it is nearly ten years since the previous census was carried out which means that the Office for National Statistics is gearing up for Census 2021. Census Day is 21 March 2021. Mr Heaton has been in touch with the Clerk regarding local publicity opportunities for the Census.
 - (b) **Notice of Conclusion of Audit of Accounts for year ended 31st March 2020** — The Council noted receipt of the notification from the External Auditor, Moore, that they have concluded the Audit of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2020 and had no matters to bring to the Council's attention (*certificate attached to the minutes*). The Clerk of the Council had published the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit of Accounts for year ended 31st March 2020 (*copy attached to the minutes*) on the Council's website and Notice Board.
 - (c) **Model Code of Conduct** — The Council noted receipt of an e-mail dated 10th December 2020 informing the Council that the Local Government Association (LGA) had been developing a Model Code of Conduct, in consultation with local authorities and other agencies such as the Committee for Standards in Public Life. A final version was approved by the LGA Board in early December 2020 and circulated to local authorities. The draft Model Code of Conduct was circulated to Parish Councillors on the 11th December 2020.

The e-mail stated that Arun District Council would be considering a report to be presented to its Standards Committee at its next meeting on 18th February 2021, for the Committee to consider Arun District Council's adoption of the Code (with some localisation changes). Arun District Council are hopeful that Town and Parish Councils would agree to adopting the new Arun Code for their own purposes so that there is consistency and clarity across the district.

The Council noted that it currently follows the Arun Code of Conduct and decided not to submit any initial comments in advance of the Committee meeting in February.

- (d) **Red Telephone Box — Bilsham Road** — The Council considered the contents of an e-mail dated 6th January 2021 from a local resident of Yapton who lives in Bilsham Road. Whilst out walking her dog she noted the out of use red phone box on Bilsham Road between Bilsham Stores and Park Road where the equipment had been removed by BT and there was a note to say that the box is property of the local council and that its upkeep is the responsibility of the community.

The resident contacted Arun District Council to see if she could clean up the phone box and turn into a book exchange. Arun have put her in contact with the Parish Council. The resident was wondering whether the Parish Council would be willing to get involved in her idea as she can't purchase the box as an individual. The resident would like to re-paint the box in its traditional red gloss paint, clean the inside and insert some shelves/a unit to store library books in. In her e-mail she comments that "I think in these times if we can spread a bit of cheer that would be lovely".

A brief discussion took place on the possible installation of a defibrillator in the Phone Box, and it was agreed that this could become a project for the medium term once funds became available.

The Parish Council **resolved** to agree to the proposal as set out above considered that this would be an appropriate use of the Telephone Box and agreed to the offer by the local resident to maintain the box and its upkeep and create a local book exchange facility.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERS/STAFF

15. Members of the Council, nor the Clerk had attended any training courses since the last meeting.

PARISH COUNCIL MAGAZINE (YAPTON NEWS)

16. The Clerk reported that a 32 page printed version of the Yapton News had been prepared for January 2021 (Edition 105) which should be available for distribution on Friday 22nd January 2021.
17. Due to the Coronavirus National Lockdown, the Clerk suggested that the Parish Council should find an alternative method of delivery, rather than using its usual volunteers and Councillors to deliver the Yapton News to all households in the parish.
18. The Clerk had located a local company, Dor-2-Dor (Chichester) Ltd, (the Company used to deliver the November edition in the November lockdown) who were prepared to deliver to all the households in the Parish for the sum of £300 (plus VAT). The Company would collect the printed magazines from the printers and would deliver them sometime after the publication date of the 22nd January 2021. The Parish Council **resolved** to engage Dor-2-Dor (Chichester) Ltd, to collect the printed magazines from the printers and to deliver the magazines to all the households in the Parish sometime after the publication date of the 22nd January in the sum of £300 (plus VAT).

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

ALLOTMENTS

19. The Clerk reported that there was currently a waiting list for the Allotments. There had been some issues with the water supply, gate locks and car parking by contractors working on the new housing site further down the lane.

EMERGENCY & RESILIENCE

20. Councillor Mrs Philippa Greenan updated the Council on the work and initiatives initially undertaken locally:
- a. With the regard to the latest lockdown, volunteers were being sourced to assist with the Vaccination Centre at the Bognor Medial Centre;
 - b. all business and the local pharmacy had been contacted to ascertain what help might be needed in the coming weeks;
 - c. an article was being produced to be posted on the parish council website with links to our social media pages;
 - d. With regard to the four parishes an Emergency Co-ordinator had been appointed by Clymping Parish Council.

PLANNING

21. The Council considered the following and:

- (a) received the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9th November 2020 (*copy attached to these minutes*);
- (b) received details of the planning decisions made by Arun District Council in November and December 2020 (*schedule attached to these minutes*).
- (c) **Updating of the “made” Yapton Neighbourhood Plan – Consultation on the Modification Proposals under Regulation 14** – The Chairman of the Planning Committee reported on a discussion and recommendation from the Council’s Planning Committee that, a consultation be commenced under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, to amend and update the “made” Yapton Neighbourhood Plan agreed in 2014. The documents (*Copies attached to these minutes*) being published as part of the consultation were forwarded to the Members of the Parish Council along with the Planning Committee Agenda and supporting papers.

The Council **resolved** to agree to the Parish Council commencing the public consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations for the period commencing on the 22nd January 2021 to run for eight weeks to the 19th March 2021.

PLAYING FIELD

22. The Clerk updated the Council on the following matters:
- a. Various maintenance works had been carried out to the play equipment;
 - b. The Clerk was in discussions concerning the quotation for the safety surfaces which had been obtained, and whether an alternative means of completing the works could be more cost effective;
 - c. 6 litter bins around the recreation and gym equipment areas needed drilling to provide drainage and new padlocks were being provided so the bins could be removed and emptied properly. Work completed.
 - d. A quotation had been accepted from a local contractor to replace the fence posts on the section of fencing running parallel to Warmere Court. The quotation also included the provision of a new gate, replacement automatic gate closures and some other minor maintenance issues.
23. At the previous meeting, Councillor Graham Holden enquired as to whether there were Section 106 monies, negotiated on some recent planning applications, which could be used to replace / renew / repair the ageing play equipment on the playing field. A year ago, he had sought to get information from Arun District Council on the outstanding Section 106 obligations and update the Council. The Clerk also reminded the Council that a former parish councillor had prepared a spreadsheet showing the outstanding amounts. Councillor Holden had been passed the spreadsheet in question and would update the information on behalf of the Parish Council.
24. The Clerk had written to Arun District Council on the matter who had replied indicating that a review of the Section 106 monies relating to Yapton was underway and that the Officer would contact the Clerk once the review had been completed. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Councillor Holden and Councillor Worne to discuss the utilisation of any monies due to Yapton and make recommendations to a future Parish Council meeting.

STAFFING COMMITTEE

25. Whilst not on the published agenda, the Council agreed to receive a verbal report from the Clerk on a recent meeting of the Staffing Committee, which had been held virtually on the 15th January 2021. The minutes (*copy attached to these minutes*) of the meeting had been circulated to Members of the Council. The following items were considered:
- (a) **Terms of Reference** – agreed.
 - (b) **Terms – Clerk’s Salary, Annual Leave, Sick Pay** – no matters requiring decision.
 - (c) **Other Conditions - Working from Home Policy**, The Clerk suggested that he draft a Working from Home Policy which the Parish Council could review and agree at its March 2021 meeting.
 - (d) **Performance Management – Annual Appraisal** - The Clerk reported that the Chairman was currently arranging to meet with the Clerk to carry out an annual appraisal which was due.

- (e) **Any Other Issues** – Clerk’s Job Description. The Clerk undertook to carry out a review of the Job Description issued in September 2014 and submit to the Committee Members for their comment and approval.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

26. The following reports from representatives on various bodies were received by the Council:

(a) **Village Hall**

There had been no meetings of the Trustees so there was no update for the meeting on the work and activities of Yapton & Ford Village Hall. The Chairman (Councillor Ambler) reported that they had been managing financially through the Pandemic period of closure of the Hall.

CONSIDERATION OF THE 2021/2022 PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET AND SETTING OF THE PARISH PRECEPT (COUNCIL TAX) FOR 2021/22

27. The Council had before it and considered a report prepared by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer setting out the revised estimates for the current financial year (2020/21) and the estimates of expenditure and income for 2021/2022 (*copy attached to minute book*).
28. Members noted that the forecast total expenditure for 2020/21 was £71,790, and the expected income and grants receivable from services was £5,440 giving a net expenditure £66,350.
29. The Clerk pointed out that the forecast total expenditure for 2021/22 was £73,440, and the expected income and grants receivable from services was £4,460 giving a net expenditure £68,980. The Council noted that the funding arrangements which now applied to the Council’s budget, meant that the net expenditure was financed from two elements only: the Precept and Parish Council reserves.
30. The Clerk advised that the provisional budget for 2021/22, a copy of which had been enclosed with the agenda papers, had been prepared on the basis of providing a similar level of services and activities as in previous years. There were some exceptions where a net increase (growth) in expenditure of £2,380, including inflation of £1,275, as listed in the report, had been included in the 2021/22 budget to deal with these increasing requirements.
31. The Clerk referred to an analysis set out in the report of the Reserves and Working Balances brought forward from the 2019/20 financial year. This identified an unspent balance of £2,217 for future work on the Yapton Neighbourhood Plan and a balance of £10,000 brought forward in the Election Reserve, with a net balance in general reserves brought forward at 1/4/20 of £20,535 to cover the Council’s routine expenditure and contingencies. The revised budget had assumed a net contribution of £1,520 to overall reserves.

32. The Council had been notified by Arun District Council that the Band D equivalent taxbase for 2021/22 had been calculated at 1509. This is a 1.2% (up from 1491) increase and would generate income from increased council tax receipts at the current rate of tax of some £830. Some of this increase had resulted from additional properties now being occupied in Yapton as a result of approved housebuilding and an estimate of the number of new properties likely to be completed and occupied during the next financial year.
33. The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer referred to a section in the report on Council Tax Limitation (Capping). On the 17th December 2020, The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government presented his statement on the local government finance settlement for 2021/22. He confirmed that the government intends to defer the setting of referendum principles for town and parish councils for the forthcoming year. This is subject to the sector taking all available steps to mitigate the need for Council Tax increases...and the government seeing clear evidence of restraint in the increases set by the sector as a whole.
34. The question of the level of precept to be demanded from Arun District Council was discussed. The Clerk advised that it was his view that a modest increase in Council Tax was warranted to finance the budget and to limit the call from reserves and working balances. The report had assumed an increase of 2% from 1st April 2021.
35. The Council agreed that the budget, resulting in the Council's net expenditure of £68,980 was needed in 2021/22 to maintain its local services. However, there was concern about the impact the ageing play facilities was having on the local community, especially families with young children who might want to use this equipment. The Clerk pointed out that significant sums were being included in the budget to try and maintain these facilities and keep them fit for purpose. Funds from S.106 contributions might become available in the future to re-invest in modern facilities, and the Parish Council should consider what facilities it wants to provide and draw up a plan to communicate its aspirations for the future with the local community.
36. Following a robust and detailed discussion it was agreed that the Council Tax needed to fund the proposed budget for 2021/22 should be increased by 2%. This would result in a precept of £70,060. This would produce an average Band D council tax of £46.43, which represents an annual increase of £0.91 on last year's figure (equivalent to a weekly increase of approximately £0.02 per Band D property).
37. The estimated total balance remaining in Reserves, after taking into account the proposed 2% increase in Council Tax in 2021/22 would be £34,582, after allowing for a small net contribution of £1,520 in 2020/21 and a small net contribution of £580 in 2021/22.

38. The Parish Council resolved that:

- (a) The approved forecast total expenditure for 2021/22 of £73,440, and the expected income from services and grants of £4,460 giving a net expenditure to be met from Council Tax and Reserves of £68,980;
- (b) The Council noted the tax base for Yapton for 2021/22 of 1509;
- (c) The Council agreed to support the budget by making a contribution of £980 in 2020/21 and £500 in 2021/22 from the Yapton Neighbourhood Plan Reserve and making a small contribution of £2,500 in 2020/21 and £1,080 in 2021/22 to the General Reserve, leaving the balance to be met by the actual precept, resulting in a precept of £70,060;
- (d) The Council Tax for the Parish of Yapton for 2021/22 be increased by 2% producing a Band D Council Tax of £46.43 (£45.52 + £0.91); and
- (e) That the Yapton Parish Council precept for the year 2021/22 be set at £70,060 (£46.43 x 1509) to cover the estimated cost of maintaining the facilities and local services as set out in the Clerk's report.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

39. The Council *resolved*:

- (a) To approve the financial statements showing the receipts and payments for the months of November and December 2020 (*schedules attached to the minute book*);
- (b) To note the Reconciliation of the Council's Bank Accounts and the Public Sector Deposit Fund as at 31st December 2020 (*copy attached to the minutes*), and to approve that Councillor Peter Dunkley, who is not a signatory to the Bank Accounts, be appointed to check and sign off the reconciliation with the Bank Statement and the Deposit Fund Statement;
- (c) To note the summary of income and expenditure over the various budget heads for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st December 2020 (*copy attached to the minute book*).

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 40. Monday 8th March 2021 at 7.30 PM or at the conclusion of the meeting of the Planning Committee, whichever is the later.**

Meeting closed at 9.24pm

_____ Chairman